

**From:** Brown, Kathy; 17 reg>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2015 7:43 AM  
**To:** AppTestimony  
**Cc:** Sen. Linares, Art; mschlag@haddam.org; Rep. Miller, Philip  
**Subject:** Support in FAVOR of SB816

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in support of bill SB816 which supports equitable ECS funding in Connecticut. The town of Haddam is vastly underfunded because the ECS funding formula was not readjusted after the CT Yankee Power Plant was decommissioned in Haddam almost a decade ago.

As a member of the Region 17 Board of Education, I volunteer my time to support a quality education, which is a Constitutional right, for the students of Haddam and Killingworth. As a Board of Education, it is our responsibility to adopt a school budget and strive to be efficient and responsible with taxpayer dollars. Last year, we had a zero increase in our town budget, and still many, many residents of Haddam voted no on the budget because our taxes are so high. This year we have experienced three budget drivers that are out of our control: increased electricity costs, health insurance (due mostly to high claims) and a rise in special education tuition, mandated by State Law. Unfortunately, many people in town blame the schools for the tax burden, not realizing the many mandates and vast expenses associated with educating 2,200 students and maintaining five buildings. It is unfortunate that the ECS issue has put such encumbrance on Haddam residents.

The dilemma is that Haddam is underfunded by ECS! I fear that if Haddam's situation continues, the quality of our school system will be at risk. Haddam is only one of 19 towns that are funded below 50%. Of all 169 municipalities, we are the 10th most underfunded town. Please don't allow Haddam taxpayers to continue to choose between supporting education and offsetting their taxes.

Our Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Howard Thiery, plans to testify in support of this bill on 4/2 on behalf of Region 17 and Haddam. SB816 is a first step in fixing the funding formula for all communities throughout the state but will most directly impact Haddam.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn Brown  
Region 17 Board of Education  
46 Park Road  
Haddam, CT 06438